



State of Connecticut

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Senator Boucher testimony in support of SB 220: An Act Concerning Navigation, Coastal Access and Clean Marinas

February 28, 2012

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo and other distinguished members of the Commerce Committee, today I testify in support of SB 220, An Act Concerning Navigation, Coastal Access and Clean Marinas, and urge this committee to pass this bill. SB 220 would allow certified clean marinas and pledged clean marinas to apply for financial assistance in dredging projects.

Dredging projects involve the removal of silt along a marina's channels and serve the dual purpose of improving water quality while ensuring that these channels remain passable by boats with deeper drafts. Though important for the financial well being of shoreline businesses and the environmental well being of Long Island Sound, dredging projects are costly and difficult to fund.

SB 220 will use existing funds from the Long Island Sound clean up account to provide grants for dredging projects to the 29 certified clean marinas currently operating in Connecticut and 20 more who have pledged to become certified. Under this bill, marinas that apply for assistance will be eligible for grants covering not less than 40% of the project cost. This degree of support would reward marinas that have already adopted environmentally friendly practices and would encourage other businesses to follow suit.

Making funds for dredging projects more readily available would also benefit Connecticut by creating jobs for engineers and dredging contractors and by making navigation safer and easier for recreational and commercial boaters. Though a small state, CT has a long coastline with a proud history of boating both as an industry and for recreational use and tourism. The shoreline enhances our quality of life and attracts visitors and residents alike who strengthen our economy.

I strongly encourage the committee to vote in favor of SB 220 for the many environmental and financial benefits it offers to Connecticut.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak in favor of this bill.